

**No matter how frustrated you feel NEVER shake a baby!**

### **Why is shaking so hazardous to a child's health?**

Babies have large heads, immature brains and weak neck muscles. When a child is shaken violently the head whips back and forth. This sudden whiplash motion causes bruising of the brain, and shears brain tissue, nerves and blood vessels, potentially causing permanent damage and even death.

### **Can some forms of play cause Shaken Baby Syndrome?**

While only violent shaking results in death or severe impairment, milder shaking may cause some damage. Do not do anything that makes a baby's head shake back and forth.

Babies should be handled in ways that let them know they are precious and cherished by all of us.



If you are in need of support or just need a break, call a friend or a hotline, or join a support group!

www.childhelp.org:  
1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

Birth to Five Parenting Helpline:  
1-877-705-KIDS (1-877-705-5437)

www.NSBAZ.org

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# NEVER SHAKE A BABY



## Tips for Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY



### ***Crying is normal...***

All babies cry, some more than others. It can be irritating and frustrating to listen to a baby cry. However, crying is a baby's only way to communicate needs and wants. Here are some common reasons for crying:

- Hunger
- Soiled diaper
- Need to suck
- Pain/illness or discomfort
- Colic
- Reaction to stress
- Over tired/Overstimulated
- Attempting to communicate

If you're ever unsure about why a baby is crying, take the baby to the doctor. There may be a medical reason.

### ***Make a plan...***

Keep a checklist around the house of what to look for and what might work to soothe a crying baby. During stressful times you'll have a quick reference guide to count on. Be sure to include ideas for taking charge of your own feelings and how to meet your own needs!

### ***What can you do for a crying baby?***

- Check for illness
- Care for baby's physical needs (hunger, diaper change, dressed too warm or too cold)
- Feed baby slowly—burp baby often
- Massage baby's back
- Offer a pacifier
- Hug and rock the baby
- Take baby for a car or stroller ride
- Wrap baby in a soft blanket
- Put on soft music—sing to the baby
- Run a vacuum within hearing range
- Put baby in a safe place and go into another room for 5 or 10 minutes
- Ask another parent what they do
- Ask someone for help
- If breast-feeding, avoid strong foods (onions, beans, salsa, coffee, tea, cola)
- Have patience, it will get better
- Congratulate yourself on getting through this difficult time



### ***What can be done to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome?***

- Never shake a baby
- Always provide support for the baby's head
- Educate other caregivers about the dangers of shaking a baby
- Learn about positive ways to soothe a crying baby
- Take a break or ask for help when you are stressed

### ***What are some of the potential hazards of shaking a baby?***

Because the brain controls the entire body, damage to the brain may affect any function. Shaking a child can result in:

- Death
- Brain damage
- Paralysis
- Seizures
- Blindness/deafness
- Mental retardation
- Learning and developmental disabilities
- Severe motor dysfunction
- Attention deficit disorder
- Dyslexia

If shaking occurs, take the child to the hospital immediately. Tell the doctor the baby has been shaken to ensure proper treatment. Early treatment can prevent future problems. It may even save the baby's life.